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ABSTRACT

Designed to assist Indian tribes and oganizations in the recruitment, training, licensing, and evaluation of Indian foster and adoptive homes, the manual is presented in six sections. The introduction provides a definition for foster care and foster children, along with excerpts from the Bill of Rights for Foster Children. Section I discusses the recruitment of Indian foster families, including a worksheet for planning a recruitment campaign, a list of recruitment possibilities (i.e., television spots, billboards, newsletters, etc.), and an outline of recruiting Indian families into the foster care system. Section II provides a training program for the Indian foster family, and requirements for foster home licensing are outlined in Section III. The evaluation process of Indian foster homes is discussed in Section IV. Section V looks at resources to assist the Indian foster family. A 38-item bibliography on Native American foster and adoptive care concludes the manual. (ERB)

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INDIAN FOSTER

AND

ADOPTIVE CARE MANUAL

April - 1982

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NATIONAL INDIAN CHILD ABUSE
AND
NEGLECT RESOURCE CENTER
OF THE
NATIVE AMERICAN COALITION OF TULSA, INC.

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FOREWORD

The Native American Coalition of Tulsa, Inc., (NACT), in partnership with the Department of Health and Human Services, established the first National Indian Child Abuse and Neglect Resource Center in October, 1978.

The National Indian Child Abuse and Neglect Resource Center, (NICANRC) was established because the existing resources were not meeting diverse needs of the abused Indian child.

Non-Indian welfare and social service agencies have historically lacked sensitivity to the cultural diversities and traditions of Native Americans. The end result being widescale removal, institutionalization, and inadequate services for Indian families.

NACT conducted extensive research and compiled all existing Indian specific materials. Thus, a clearinghouse was established to disseminate existing information and technical assistance. The NICANRC has provided training to local, state, and national Indian and non-Indian groups in the prevention and treatment of Indian specific child abuse and neglect.

The National Center has increased Indian involvement in addressing Child Abuse and Neglect, and has assisted tribes in assuming their responsibility for Indian Child Welfare issues. To date the National Center has provided over 170 tribes and 50 Indian organizations with direct assistance in all ten federal regions.

INTRODUCTION

This manual is to be used in assisting Indian tribes and organizations in the recruitment, training, licensing, and evaluating of Indian foster and adoptive homes.

Indian children are institutionalized at an alarming rate when compared to children within the general population. The exact figure will fluctuate due to variables affecting Indian children and families, but it will undoubtably remain at a high level due to the factors which impact the disfunctional Indian family. This situation being caused by one or more of the following factors; lack of adequate housing, community position, job and income, low self-esteem, and the inability to relate past child rearing practices with modern society. Indeed, there are other factors of importance which are not listed.

Many Indian child welfare entities realize more emphasis and efforts need to be directed toward foster, and adoptive care. It is because of this concern that the NICANRC has developed this manual to assist Indian tribes, and programs which are seeking help in recruitment training, licensing, and evaluation of latitude to create a program suited to their individual needs. These differences will be addressed, and examples given of the various types of programs in existence.

It is critical for each tribe or program to develop program and services that will meet the specific need of their community.

WHAT IS FOSTER CARE?

Foster care is the temporary care provided to children who for a variety of reasons can no longer live with their own families. It is not adoption or a permanent situation. The goal of foster care is to provide a home environment for children until their natural family can be reunited, or an alternative plan can be made. Foster children may stay in placement a few days, to several years, depending on the individual family's circumstances.

Nearly all children who are adopted are prepared for adoption while living with temporary foster families. This does not prevent a foster family from becoming a permanent adoptive family.

WHO ARE FOSTER CHILDREN?

The children who are in need of foster care cannot be classified — each is an individual with a unique personality and experiences. They range from infants to teenagers and come from various backgrounds. Some have lost their parents to death, illness, hospitalizations, imprisonment, or abandonment. Others have families who are unable to cope with their specialized needs, such as mental or physical handicaps. Some youth may have reacted to family, school or other problems through illegal activities. All have experienced some type of loss or uprooting from their "known" family to a confusing world of uncertainty. All people especially children need to belong — to be accepted in a family as a respected person with needs, rights, and responsibilities.

Foster parents need to understand the childs background and experiences prior to placement. Some children may not be able to talk about the feeling of hurt, bewilderment, guilt and rejection which often occur when they are separated from their families. They sometimes express feelings by disobeying or withdrawing.

It is important to understand these negative feelings. Foster parents need to help foster children express their feelings in a positive way. A way that will be beneficial to both the child and the foster family.

BILL OF RIGHTS

Listed below is the Bill of Rights for foster children:

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 416

Offered by Representatives Nelson, Geake, Damman, Kehres, Snyder, Farnsworth, McCollough and Mowat and Senator McCollough

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION DECLARING THE INHERENT RIGHT OF FOSTER CHILDREN

WHEREAS, The following Bill of Rights for Foster Children was ratified in Congress Hall, Philadelphia, Saturday, April 28, 1973:

Bill of Rights for Foster Children
Ratified in Congress Hall, Philadelphia
Saturday, the Twenty-eighth of April Nineteen hundred and seventy-three

EVEN *more than for other children, society has a responsibility along with parents for the well-being of foster children. Citizens are responsible for acting to insure their welfare.* EVERY *foster child is endowed with the rights inherently belonging to all children. In addition, because of the temporary or permanent separation from and loss of parents and other family members, the foster child requires special safeguards, resources, and care.*

EVERY FOSTER CHILD HAS THE INHERENT RIGHT:

Article the first . . . . . to be cherished by a family of his own, either his family helped by readily available services and supports to reassume his care, or an adoptive family or by plan, a continuing foster family.

Article the second . . . . . to be nurtured by foster parents who have been selected to meet his individual needs, and who are provided services and supports, including specialized education, so that they can grow in their ability to enable the child to reach his potential.

Article the third . . . . . to receive sensitive, continuing help in understanding and accepting the reasons for his own family's inability to take care of him, and in developing confidence in his own self-worth.

Article the fourth . . . . . to receive continuing loving care and respect as a unique human being.

Article the fifth ..... *to grow up in freedom and dignity in a neighborhood of people who accept him with understanding, respect and friendship.*

Article the sixth ..... *to receive help in overcoming deprivation or whatever distortion in his emotional, physical, intellectual, social and spiritual growth may have resulted from his early experiences.*

Article the seventh ..... *to receive education, training, and career guidance to prepare him for a useful and satisfying life.*

Article the eighth ..... *to receive preparation for citizenship and parenthood through interaction with foster parents and other adults who are consistent role models.*

Article the ninth ..... *to be represented by an attorney at law in administrative or judicial proceedings with access to fair hearing and court review of decisions, so that his best interests are safeguarded.*

Article the tenth ..... *to receive a high quality of child welfare services, including involvement of the natural parents and his own involvement in major decisions that affect his life; now therefore be it*

RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES (the Senate concurring), That the Michigan Legislature does hereby sponsor and support the Bill of Rights for Foster Children.

Adopted by the House of Representatives, April 1, 1974
Adopted by the Senate, April 3, 1974

Foster children also have responsibilities to their foster family. They are to attend school, inform the foster family of their whereabouts, and learn to accept and live by family limits and rules.

Unique rights of foster children are as follows:

- the right to understand why they are in a foster home,
- the right to be included in the planning process for their return to their family, an adoptive home or independent living,
- the right to visit and communicate with their family, unless doing so is damaging to physical or mental well-being of child.
- the right to be prepared to leave the foster home and for the foster family to accept the mixed feelings of them leaving.

When the time comes to leave the foster home, the child needs support and reassurance so the transition can be made as smooth as possible.

SECTION I

RECRUITING THE INDIAN FOSTER FAMILY

RECRUITMENT

The Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 states that Indian children needing foster care should be placed in Indian foster homes. A child welfare expert said, "interracial foster homes may be harmful to the children involved. Studies have shown that Indian children who are placed in non-Indian environments often experience ethnic confusion, loss of identity, and a sense of abandonment by their relatives and families." Many of these children are affected in a negative manner in the area of family life, cultural, and traditional values, and in their own parenting skills. It is important that when a child is separated from their family, continuity exists within the cultural community.

When recruiting foster homes for Indian children it is important to keep in mind the importance of maintaining a balance in the life of the Indian child by attempting to place the child in an Indian home.

Indian families are the best resource for Indian children needing a temporary home. They can serve as important role models for Indian children by instilling a positive self-identity as an Indian . Trauma of separation from ones parents is a painful experience regardless of race. When Indian children are placed in a foreign environment, they have an additional burden in adjustment and development. Generally, Indian foster families are more sensitive to the needs of Indian children, and trust bonds are more easily established by children.

With the passage, and implementation of the Indian Child Welfare Act, the tribes and Indian community have the responsibility in determining the future of the Indian child. Many Indian families are unaware of the need of Indian foster homes. Throughout the nation, Indian children are being placed with non-Indian families. Concerned Indian families could make a difference in what happens to Indian children.

Indian foster parents will be helping other families who are in crisis by providing a temporary home until the children and their parents can be reunited, or permanently placed.

Realizing that the methods for recruiting foster homes will vary, different examples will be provided so that they can be used as models from which a suitable method can be developed.

There will be two basic environments the child will enter in the Indian foster home. One will be the home which is more attuned to the needs and requirements of the child placing agency with the child being secondary. For example, if a prospective family wants to become a foster family they inquire as to the requirements, then see that they meet them. The child placing agency then selects the child for them eliminating the need for the family to participate in the selection process.

The second environment is the family which has been specific in their selection of a particular child. They may have seen pictures or ads of a child and decide that is the child they want. With this family the childs needs will receive top priority with the agencies role being secondary.

Good recruitment doesn't just happen — it requires planning and advance preparation. Following are two basic approaches to recruitment:

1. **Generic recruitment** —

The generic approach will describe the needs of the child placing agency and the child in general terms. It involves a presentation of information to the public. Some agencies prefer the generic approach because it allows broad education about varied special needs, without encouraging families to identify or become attached to a single child.

2. **Child-specific recruitment** —

This approach focuses on individual "waiting" children. The most common example of this approach is a regular feature article in newspapers, newsletters, or television. A different child is featured in child-specific recruitment and gets positive attention.

There are, however, advantages and disadvantages to both recruitment approaches, and it is possible to use a combination of both approaches in a good recruitment program.

An advantage of child-specific recruitment is, potential foster parents will become interested and receptive to a type of available children.

Utilizing the child-specific approach will require more complex planning. It will also take advocacy and commitment to convince appropriate authorities, the child is not being exploited by the "ad." Issues of confidentiality must be dealt with. The child should be prepared for this type of exposure, through explanation as to what is going to happen. When possible, the child should have a part in deciding what will be revealed in the public advertisement.

The preliminary step to a serious recruitment effort is the determination of which approach the child-placing agency is most comfortable with.

Aside from actual or potential placements, the educational value of a recruitment program must go on. The child placing agency should continue to educate the community; continue to heighten the publics interest and motivation; and continue to recruit families for children.

WORKSHEET FOR PLANNING A RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN

I. GOALS

A. What Do We Want To Achieve? (Simple sentences about specific results desired. If more than one, number by order of importance.)

1. Attract more applications for Indian children.

2. Increase agency visibility and positive image in minority communities.

B. **Agency Self-Analysis.** In what ways might our needs be affected by:

1. Agency Policies:
   - possibly upper age limits are restrictive
   - some families need more flexible appointment hours
   - possibly re-design medical forms, de-emphasize fertility tests

2. Staff Patterns:
   - 3 Indian staff – other staff generally comfortable working with minority families. Possibly use more teaming of staff.

3. Home Study Process:
   - some families have difficulty getting off from work for office interviews.

4. Community Perception of Adoption:
   - some families are "afraid" of agency adoptions because of impressions of being asked intimate questions.

5. Agency Image in the Community:
   - some negative associations with assistance programs
   - some workers viewed as "aloof," "snobbish"
   - need to publicize some services not generally well known

6. Past Recruitment Efforts:
   - newspaper features that have worked – (without highlighting specific children)
   - had problems responding to families *fast enough*
   - had good brochure (clear, simple, with lots of photos) *but need better ways to distribute* recruitment materials

7. Other:
   - have good relationship with Children Services staff
   - might plan joint effort

II. OBJECTIVES & ACTIVITIES

A. *Ways We Might Reach Our Goal(s) and Activities We Might Use In A Comparison Campaign.* (List possible activities for each objective.)

1. Publicize adoption and foster care in Indian neighborhoods:
   - posters in community centers, barber/beauty shops, churches
   - make presentations to groups
   - hold a community meeting
   - inserts in grocery bags
   - PSAs on television
2. Make typical families visible:
   - feature a "Family of the Month" in newsletter
   - TV interviews with model families
   - panel of adoptive parents at community meeting
3. Make children visible:
   - brochure featuring a dozen representative children
   - child-specific features in Sunday supplement
   - possibly have some children on television

III. TARGET AUDIENCE

A. **Whom Do We Want To Reach?**

1. Specific groups and types of families we hope will respond?
   - ***all* types of Indian families**, crossing social strata
2. Where do these people live and work?
   - a Tribal Housing Authority urban project
   - downtown district in a large city
   - Tribal housing
3. How can we best carry the campaign to them?
   - Indian focus program on TV
   - radio station
   - "Impulse" weekly paper
   - Civic organization
   - Indian Community Action Group
   - displays in downtown department stores

RECRUITMENT POSSIBILITIES

- Television spots (10-30-60-second public service announcements)
- Television public service or community interest interview programs (locally originated, usually 30-minute format, often not aired in prime time)

- Radio spot announcements (10-15-30-second public service spots)
- Radio interview programs
- Newspaper feature stories
- Newspaper columns with periodic publication (weekly, bi-weekly, monthly)
- News pegs: releases, news conferences, events that attract news department attention (e.g., a fund-raising marathon covered by local TV, or proclamation by mayor or governor of "Child Welfare Week," "National Adoption Week" — which coincides with the week of Thanksgiving)
- Brochures, pamphlets
- Slide presentations (with script or tape-recorded story)
- Airing of classic movies ("Johnny Boy," "Forever Home")
- 8mm "home" movies
- Posters
- Billboards
- Bumper stickers, decals
- Buttons
- Bus and taxi cab placards
- Slogans or themes on bookmarks, pencils, balloons, key chains, rain hats, T-shirts, etc.
- Displays (in store windows, libraries)
- Information booths in malls, conventions, meetings, fairs, etc.
- Placemats in restaurants
- Flyers or handouts (placed on windowshields in parking lots, distributed in neighborhoods, malls, etc.)
- Bill inserts (or notices in telephone or utility bills)
- Church bulletin inserts or notices
- Calendars
- Newsletters with specific target audience

- Special events, carnivals or fairs (with adoption week activities "Parade")
- Picnics, ice-cream socials, theme night activities (disco dance, Native American night, etc.)
- Puppet show
- Speakers' Bureau, scheduling presentations to civic groups, clubs, churches
- Awards programs, appreciation nights, banquets to publicize individual investments and model types of participation needed (foster parent awards, advocacy awards, worker recognition)
- Welcome Wagon packets
- "Hero" endorsements — from O.J. Simpson to local pop hero, Indian actors
- Tea, drop-in, or open house
- Door-to-door canvas, surveys in shopping malls
- Traveling mobile unit, scheduling stops in key locations in remote communities (i.e., bookmobiles)
- Public meetings, Tribal meetings
- Parent panels, communicating what it's like to be a foster parent, adoptive parent
- Task force made up of professional organization representatives to identify key resource persons (prospective parents for special types of children, media contacts, volunteers, etc.)
- Original "jingles: as campaign themes
- Articles in "house organ" publications (e.g., R.J. Reynolds Newsletter, Commission for the Blind Communications)
- "Adoption" parties
- "A-thons," including sponsored walk-a-thons, bike-a-thons, jog-a-thons, rock-a-thons
- Theater parties

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RECRUITMENT OF INDIAN FAMILIES INTO FOSTER CARE SYSTEM

I. Initial Contact with Department of Human Services
   A. Assessment of resources available through D.H.S.;
      1. Persons
      2. Printed Materials
      3. Audio Visual Material
      4. Commitment on Part of Personnel

II. Become Familiar with Standards for Licensing Foster Homes
   A. Determine areas that will present great difficulties for approval of Indian homes in your areas
      1. Housing
      2. Income
      3. Sleeping Arrangements
      4. Other
   B. Determine "philosophy" of Foster Care Unit in your County (how flexible in terms of stretching the rules)

III. Assessment of Indian Population with Which You Work
   A. Determining Strengths;
      1. Family Structures
      2. Extended Family Involvement in Child Rearing
   B. Determining Weaknesses;
      1. Economics
      2. Housing
      3. Other

IV. Determine Best Way to Disseminate Information and Recruit Families
   A. Determining Factors;
      1. Urban Areas Versus Rural Areas
      2. Availability of Central Meeting Place
      3. Availability of Transportation for Families
      4. Availability of Staff to Assist in Recruitment Effort (it's hard to do it alone)

   B. Alternatives
      1. Hold one (1) Large Orientation Meeting at Central Location
      2. Hold Satellite Meetings;
         a) at Tribal Buildings
         b) at Churches
         c) in Individual's Homes
      3. Do a Mail-out and Media Campaign for Foster Families and Schedule Individual Visits with Interested Families
      4. Use Community Health Representative's

C. Use all Available Resources to Disseminate Information;
   1. Local Town and Indian Newspapers
   2. Posters;
      a) at Tribal Offices
      b) Churches
      c) Frequent Gathering Places such as Stores, Laundries
   3. Mail-out Brochures on Foster Care
   4. T.V. Public Announcements
   5. Grape-Vine

V. Holding an Orientation Meeting for Indian Families on Foster Care
   A. Who Should Present the Information?
      1. Indian Child Welfare Staff and Other Indian Resource People
      2. Department of Human Services from Foster Care Unit Social Workers
      3. A Combination of Indian Staff and D.H.S. Social Worker
      4. Foster Parents Already Involved in the System (Preferably Indian)
   B. Things to be Considered in Presenting the Information on Foster Care to Indian People (Whether done to one (1) Family or a Large Group) or in Writing Brochure;
      1. Many People have a Distrust of Bad Feelings Associated with the "Welfare Department"
      2. Many Indian Families do not Believe They can Qualify Under the Guidelines for Foster Families
      3. Money Paid for Foster Care is not Enough to Make it a Profitable Endeavor for Anyone
      4. Being Foster Parents is not, an Easy Thing, but, it has it's Rewards
      5. Indian Children Need Indian Foster Families!

With Permission of: Indian Health Care Resource Center
Indian Child Welfare Program
Tulsa, Oklahoma

SECTION

II

TRAINING THE INDIAN FOSTER FAMILY

In order to achieve successful placement, potential foster parents must be prepared through training. Recently, a study conducted by Nova University in California indicated that foster parents who received training were twice as likely to remain foster parents as those who did not. The needs of the children who require placement are varied. Basic parenting skills are not enough to meet these varied needs. Children who are subjected to the "system" tend to have more disciplinary problems in school and social adjustment. New foster families can avoid a lot of problems and mistakes by receiving training. A common mistake made by new foster parents is the misunderstanding of the adjustment phases a foster child experiences. The new foster family may eagerly give the child a lot of love and affection and completely overwhelm them. They may also want to immediately replace the old with the new. For example, an old toy or other belongings brought by the child to the new foster home may have emotional connections with the childs natural family. The loss of the natural family presents a very real grief to the child and he should be allowed to mourn that loss.

Careful planning between the placement agency and the foster family, focusing on the child as an individual, can help to determine specific needs of the child.

Some areas needing attention are:

- The length of time the child has been in the placement system.
- Is this the first foster home or one of many in the length of time the child has been in the system?
- What are the reasons for the child being removed from the natural family?
- What are the reasons the child has been removed from previous foster homes?

These are some of the questions which must be answered when planning for effective foster care of the child. This also helps the new family prepare for the unique individual the new parents are opening their homes and hearts to.

Indian foster families should be prepared to deal effectively with problem situations when they arise. Training the family can, and probably should, take place in a variety of settings and through a variety of methods. Some are group sessions through local child and family agencies, or individual training through Indian child welfare programs. Additional methods are through experienced foster parents, or local foster care associations. Training should be provided to the adult foster family members in the homes, and it is recommended that training be a requirement for licensing. The amount and extent of training for each foster family is dependent on the experience of that family in child-rearing. For example: A young married couple with no children would require more extensive training than a older couple with grown children. A tribal training program for foster families should meet the needs of that particular group. One recommendation is that Indian foster family training be a minimum of twelve hours. The components in a training program should include, but certainly not be limited to the following:

A. Child Development
B. Communication
C. Discipline
D. Foster Care Relationships
E. Coping and Stress Skills
F. Basic Parenting Education
G. Basic Child Abuse and Neglect Treatment
H. Sources of Community Services

Foster parents are professional parents and are concerned about the children in their homes. With training and agency support they can develop good skills in child development and behavior management. They provide a model of stable family living and can demonstrate skills in parenting, planning and using leisure time to enhance family life, and show the importance of a warm positive approach.

Foster parents must have training opportunities which include specification of their role as foster parents.

SECTION III

LICENSING THE INDIAN FOSTER HOME

LICENSING

Requirements for foster home licensing will vary from state to state and from program to program. In some instances, Indian foster homes must comply with the licensing requirements and standards of the state in which they live. In other areas, tribes who have exclusive jurisdiction over their children have developed standards and requirements for their own particular tribal use. Indian people who are interested in becoming foster parents can and should visit the local tribal child welfare office to find out what the local requirements are. Because of the variation in standards and requirements, this section will be based on general practices.

Once the decision has been made to become a foster parent, then the next step is to apply for a foster home license.

The requirements are not generally prohibitive to a particular lifestyle. An Indian foster family can be a married couple, with the husband employed and the wife a housewife and/or a mother. Or an employed single person may qualify, if child care is available.

The home must meet certain safety standards, and may be an apartment, duplex, or single family dwelling with adequate space for children. Foster parents are required to be in good health and obtain certain health tests during the process of licensing. The test for tuberculosis is an example of a health test usually required. Some child-placing agencies may require other additional tests.

The family must have an adequate income to meet their own needs. The foster childs basic needs are provided through the placement agency in the form of a monthly reimbursement. This reimbursement generally comes from the state child welfare agency which handles child welfare cases. In addition, the child may be eligible for services from local Indian Health services facility.

Foster parents will also be required to work closely with the child placing agency in reaching goals beneficial to the child.

The foster family will be allowed to choose the sex and age of the child placed with them.

Some general procedures for licensing are as follows:

Application: The prospective foster parents will complete a formal application required by the child-placing agency. The agency then processes the application, generally beginning with a home study.

Home Study: The purpose of the home study is to:

A. Share information with the applicant
B. Evaluate the foster parenting abilities of the applicant.
C. Determine if the foster child is suited to the family.
D. Determine if the standards of the child placing agency will be met.

The home study will usually consist of three or four interviews during which the applicant and agency workers will share information concerning the foster care placement.

These interviews must include at least one home visit, preferably with all family members present, and the remaining visits may be through office, individual, or group contact. It is important to include all family members living in the home, to insure their opportunity to share feelings about having a foster child in the home.

The home study can be summarized in narrative form and should include documentation that agency standards will be met. Most tribal agencies are developing and utilizing forms for their child placing activities. The content and format of the forms may vary from state to state and from program to program. The content may include but not be limited to the following:

A. Reasons for wanting to become a foster parent.
B. Broad questions concerning:
    1. family home life
    2. family income/financial status
    3. background of potential foster parents
    4. other questions that would help the agency worker evaluate abilities of the applicant to be a foster parent.

The purpose of the home study process is to determine and make certain that children placed with the family in a foster care situation will be well-cared for and protected.

Upon satisfactory completion of the home study and initial screening, the tribal child placing agency will issue a temporary license. The period of time, to receive family certification generally runs 30 to 60 days. During this time the family will have the opportunity to experience the foster home situation and become acquainted with the child. In addition, the agency worker will evaluate the foster parents ability and the childs feeling toward the home and family.

Not all foster care situations will be pleasant and problem free, and the foster family should not become discouraged if the first attempt is not satisfactory.

The foster family will be voluntarily offering their home and love to a child in need, and the agency worker will be trained to match the home and child in the most appropriate manner to benefit both the foster child and foster parents.

Perhaps the most important thing for a new foster parent to do in preparing for the child, is to relax and be themselves. The first real job after the child arrives is to be patient and help the child to feel at home.

The process of licensing is to determine whether or not a family and home are suitable for foster care. In addition, it is designed as a protection for foster children and is an assurance that they will receive competent care in the most suitable environment.

Following is a sample questionnaire. Again, there will be variations. Each child placing agency may utilize forms and questionnaires responsive to their own particular needs.

SAMPLE
TRIBAL AGENCY
FOSTER HOME QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of Husband: _____

Name of wife: _____

Address: _____

City, State, ZIP: _____

Phone: _____ Phone to be reached: _____

Nearest grade school: _____ Distance: _____

APPLICANTS

HUSBAND

Birthdate: _____ Place of Birth: _____

Occupation: _____ Salary: _____

Religion: _____ Race: _____

WIFE

Birthdate: _____ Place of Birth: _____

Occupation: _____ Salary: _____

Religion: _____ Race: _____

MEMBERS IN HOUSEHOLD

NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	SEX	SCHOOL GRADE OR OCCUPATION	RELATIONSHIP
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

HOUSING

Number of rooms in home: _____ Own: _____ Rent: _____

Utilities provided: Water: _____ Electric: _____ Gas: _____

Number of bedrooms: _____ Number in each bedroom: _____

Other remarks:

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OUTLINE FOR CHILD'S SUMMARY

I. Identifying Data
   A. Name (nickname)
   B. Date and place of birth
   C. Social Security Number
   D. Sex, race, and religion
   E. Legal status and custody
   F. Present living situation

II. Sources of Information

III. Foster Care Experiences and Current Adjustments

IV. Child's Personality and History
   A. Appearance (description)
   B. Health
      1. Developmental information
         a. Prenatal and delivery
         b. Neonatal
         c. Growth and development
      2. Current
         a. Illnesses and hospitalizations
         b. Immunizations
   C. School and adjustment
   D. Work experience
   E. Law violations
   F. Test results

V. Family Composition
   A. Parents and siblings — name, age, relationship
   B. Mother
      1. Place and date of birth
      2. Race, nationality, and religion
      3. Education and occupation
      4. Physical and personality description
      5. Health
      6. Marital information
      7. Military service
   C. Father
      1. Place and date of birth
      2. Race, nationality, and religion, tribe
      3. Education and occupation
      4. Physical and personality description
      5. Health
      6. Marital information
      7. Military service

D. Siblings
   1. Place and date of birth
   2. Education and occupation
   3. Physical and personality description
   4. Health
   5. Marital information

VI. Relationships
   A. Family — parents and siblings
   B. Others (extended family, parental substitutes, teachers, etc.)

VII. Problems Leading to Request for Placement

SECTION IV

EVALUATING THE INDIAN FOSTER HOME

EVALUATING

In order to assure the protection of children in foster care, and that maximum opportunities for growth and development are provided, the child placement agency will conduct periodic evaluations of the foster home. The evaluation process will vary from program to program, and will be discussed between agency worker and foster parent before placement. Some essential elements of concern during the evaluation are as follows:

1. Basic agency requirements are being met.
2. Family is well adjusted and are comfortable in meeting their own needs as well as foster childs.
3. Providing the child with positive discipline, guidance, care, and training according to the childs particular needs.

Other elements of concern the agency worker will notice are the parents abilities to deal with the normal human emotions such as anger, frustration, conflict and sorrow. Also to be evaluated are the abilities of the foster parents to work with the agency, to openly discuss any problem areas, and abilities to accept the relationship between the child and the childs natural family.

Evaluation of the Indian foster family home will occur simply to insure the placement is a proper one and mutually rewarding for both the parents and child.

SECTION V

ASSISTING THE INDIAN FOSTER FAMILY

ASSISTING

In addition to the monetary reimbursement for foster care by the state, the child placement agency will also provide other services to assist the foster parents in providing for the childs needs. In some instances, tribes and state agencies provide the foster parents with a 24 hour phone number should they need to contact the agency.

Also, one of the exciting happenings in foster care has been the formulation of local, state and national foster parent associations. These associations have been instrumental in bringing about positive changes to family foster care. They have influenced legislation; they continue to provide input into agency policies; and most importantly, they are developing a profession of foster care.

The associations are also instrumental in recruiting new foster families. The child placement agency should make themselves aware of the existing associations in their state through the state's Child Welfare division. Helpful resources existing within the community may include mental health boards, social service agencies, educational agencies, and other helping organizations.

An imperative responsibility of the child placement agency is to provide a support system and resources to the foster parent.

There will be questions arising from time to time that may not have been addressed during the licensing and interviewing stages. The foster family needs to be assured that there will be assistance when they need it.

Being a foster parent can be frustrating, but at the same time very rewarding for both the family and child.

Conclusion

Studies indicate that Indian children in need of foster care tend to accept more readily Indian foster parents. The Indian child can "identify" with and "fit in" to an Indian home with greater ease. In addition, Indian foster parents are sensitive to the unique cultural needs of the Indian child. Culture has been proven to be an important variable in the chidrens protective service system.

The Indian foster child can accept the frustration of separation from his biological family; is better able to maintain his Indian identity, and is less likely to resent change, when provided with an Indian foster home.

Today there are not enough Indian foster homes to provide for all the Indian children in need. Some reasons may be attributed to a lack of awareness, or not being familiar with the process involved. Still another, may be a fear Indian people have about qualifying. Due to the socio-economic condition of the average Indian family, licensing requirements are too strict for many to qualify. Most state requirements are based on non-Indian values and standards. Whereas, if the requirements were sensitized and based on Indian values, many more Indian families would be qualified.

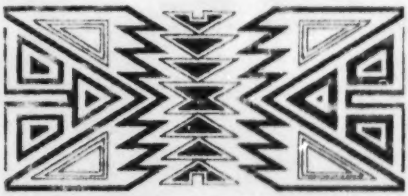
Whatever the reason, there still remains a critical need for Indian foster parents.

The temporary care provided by the Indian foster home is critical, as it bridges the gap between the childs past problems and future solutions in an orderly, progressive, and effective manner.

The foster parent will be more than just a provider of the necessities of life to the child. He will become not only a parent, but also a counselor, confidant, a companion, and more importantly a friend.

The decision to become a foster parent is too important to be made lightly, without careful consideration of the responsibility involved. Also to be considered are motivations, the family's thoughts and feelings, and a general look at the whole picture of foster care.

Once the decision has been made to become a foster parent, it can lead to many worthwhile and satisfying experiences for both the Indian child and the Indian foster parent.



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